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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
EURE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CU-06
OMB-01 /062 W
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O 051617Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6920

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FOR M & EUR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PDIP. PGOV. EGEN, OGEN. UK
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF BRITISH OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION

1. SUMMARY: A 442-PAGE STUDY PROPOSING RADICAL CHANGES IN HMG'S OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC SERVICE, INCLUDING SEVERE CUTS IN MANPOWER AND FACILITY LEVELS. WAS RELEASED PUBLICLY AUGUST 3D BY THE CABINET OFFICE'S CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW STAFF. THIS INDEPENDENT BODY PROPOSED THREE OPTIONS FOR EFFECTING INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, AND EXPRESSED A LOW REGARD FOR OVERSEAS INFORMATION/CULTURAL WORK AND POLITICAL REPORTING. THE STUDY DID NOT IMPACT AS HEAVILY AS IT MIGHT HAVE DUE TO NUMEROUS LEAKS OF MUCH OF ITS CONTENTS PRIOR TO PUBLICATION. IN FACT, THESE LEAKS, AND RESPONSES THERETO, CAUSED THE ORIGINAL DRAFT (WHICH WAS CONSIDERABLY STRONGER) TO BE SHELVED, AND A MORE RESTRAINED FINAL STUDY TO BE MADE PUBLIC. INITIAL REACTION (AS REPORTED IN THE LOCAL PRESS) TO THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES SUGGESTED IN THE STUDY FOR THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND ITS OVERSEAS ESTABLISHMENTS HAS GENERALLY BEEN UNFAVORABLE (TERMING THEM "CONFUSED AND BUREAUCRATIC"), BUT THE AUGUST 4 LONDON TIMES NOTES THAT WHITEHALL
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BUREAUCRATS AND EVEN UK DIPLOMATS FOUND MUCH TO COMMEND IN THE STUDY'S CONTENTS. BRITAIN'S "DIPLOMATIC SERVICES ASSOCIATION" HAS EXPECTEDLY RAISED VOCIFEROUS OBJECTIONS TO THE STUDY'S FINDINGS, AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE NERVOUSNESS IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES AS TO POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO CAREERS EMINATING FROM THE FINDINGS. HEAVY PRESS COVERAGE (ON FRONT PAGES OF ALL MAJOR QUALITY PAPERS ON

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8/3) HAS STIMULATED WIDESPREAD DISCUSSION, WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RESULT IN AN EXHAUSTIVE REVIEW BY PARLIAMENT BEFORE ENACTMENT OF ANY OF THE STUDY'S RECOMMENDATIONS. FYI: THIS REVIEW IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO THE END OF THE YEAR END FYI & SUMMARY.
2. A REPORT BY THE CENTRAL POLICY REVIEW STAFF (CPRS)-- HMG'S INDEPENDENT "THINK TANK"--RELEASED AUGUST 3D PUTS BRITAIN'S FOREIGN SERVICE ESTABLISHMENT UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY, AND FINDS IT IS IN NEED OF MAJOR ADJUSTMENT TO BRING IT IN LINE WITH THE UK'S PRESENT POSITION IN THE WORLD ORDER. IT CITES AS A GUIDING PREMISE THAT NEITHER CIVIL SERVANTS NOR MINISTERS HAVE ADEQUATELY ACCEPTED THE FACT THAT THE DECLINE OF THE COUNTRY'S INFLUENCE AND PRESTIGE SINCE WORLD WAR II NECESSITATES CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE AND MODUS OPERANDI OF ITS DIPLOMATIC ESTABLISH-MENT. THE MAJOR REFORMS SUGGESTED IN THE STUDY ARE:
(A) 55 RPT 55 FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS (IN SMALLER COUNTRIES WHERE THE UK HAS LITTLE TRADE OR SPECIAL CONNECTIONS) SHOULD BE CLOSED;
(B) CONSULAR SERVICES SHOULD BE CUT AWAY FROM THE FOREIGN SERVICE AND IMMIGRATION FORMALITIES SIMPLIFIED;
(C) THE OPERATIONS OF INFORMATION AND CULTURAL ORGANIZA-TIONS (E.G., BBC WORLD SERVICE, CENTRAL OFFICE OF INFOR-MATION) SHOULD BE REDUCED IN SIZE DUE TO THE FACT THAT WORK DONE BY THESE ORGANIZATIONS DOES NOT NOW JUSTIFY RESOURCES THEY EXPEND (COMPLETELY REPORTED IN LONDON
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12860 & 12875);
(D) A GENERAL "TRIMMING DOWN" OF DIPLOMATIC LIFESTYLES. TO INCLUDE:
(1) PERSONALIZED REPRESENTATION ALLOWANCES BEING INCOR-PORATED IN AN OVERALL MISSION FUND;
(2) AN END TO OVERLY-LUXJURIOUS HOUSING FOR DIPLOMATS;
(3) FEWER DIPLOMATS AND MORE CIVIL SERVANTS POSTED ABROAD (A LOSS OF 365 TO 500 FS POSITIONS TO "CORRECT STRUCTURAL IMBALANCES").
(E) INCREASED EMPHASIS ON EXPORT PROMOTION TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING. THIS WOULD INVOLVE COMBINING THE FOREIGN SERVICE AND DEPARTMENT OF TRADE'S SPECIALISTS "UNDER ONE ROOF" TO PROVIDE COMMON DIRECTION TO EXPORT PROMOTION PROGRAMS AT HOME AND ABROAD;
(F) FEWER MILITARY ATTACHES SHOULD BE ASSIGNED ABROAD;
(G) A COMPULSORY RETIREMENT PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE SHOULD BE INSTITUTED; AND
(H) AN INCREASED LEVEL OF SPECIALIZATION ON THE PART OF OVERSEAS EMPLOYEES.
3. THE STUDY SETS FORTH THREE OPTIONS WHICH WOULD EFFECT THESE REFORMS. THEY ARE:

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(A) GREATER INTERCHANGE BETWEEN THE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE & THE CIVIL SERVICE, TO INCLUDE A TENFOLD EXPANSION OF CIVIL SERVANTS WORKING ABROAD AND A 16-FOLD EXPANSION OF DIPLOMATS WORKING AT HOME.
(B) CREATION OF A SPECIALIST EXPORT PROMOTION SERVICE AND A SPECIALIST AID ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE CIVIL SERVICE. THIS WOULD INVOLVE A REDUCTION OF THE SCOPE AND SIZE OF THE EXISTING FOREIGN SERVICE AND HANDLING OF ISSUES BY HOME-BASED SPECIALISTS IN TRAVEL STATUS.
(C) MERGER OF THE CIVIL AND FOREIGN SERVICES, AND THE CREATION THEREFROM OF A "FOREIGN SERVICE GROUP" APPROX-IMATELY 37 PCT. LARGER THAN THE PRESENT DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.
4. ALTHOUGH THE STUDY AVOIDS OUTRIGHT RECOMMENDATION OF ANY PARTICULAR OPTION, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE FINAL OPTION (C ABOVE) IS THE CPRS PREFERRED SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM.
5. IN RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REQUEST. WE HAVE POUCHED A COPY OF THE STUDY TO M (JOAN CLARK) THIS DATE. LONDON NEWSPAPER COMMENTARY ON THE STUDY IS AVAILABLE IN THE DEPARTMENT (OF SPECIFIC SIGNIFICANCE IS THE FACT THAT BOTH THE LONDON TIMES AND FINANCIAL TIMES PRINTED THE STUDY'S SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN FULL IN THEIR 8/3 / ISSUES).
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6. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY SURFACE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Executive Order: N/A
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Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Status: NATIVE
Subject: REVIEW OF BRITISH OVERSEAS REPRESENTATION
TAGS: PDIP, PGOV, EGEN, OGEN, UK
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Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4af96f61-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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